

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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Editorial

The Net Result of it All

Once more the "Glorious Fourth" has come and gone, and now since the excitement is over and people have had an opportunity to give vent to their bottled up patriotism in the generous use of fire crackers, rockets, Catherine wheels, whizzers and other pyrotechnics, and everything has settled back again into the usual order of things, there should be a little time given to serious reflection. It seems that on this day everybody has money whether they have any on other days or not, and at no other time do people seem to be so generous with it or spend it so lavishly. New York City spent more than \$2,000,000 for pyrotechnics, and the fireworks dealers in that city say they sold above \$5,000,000 worth for other cities, and they are not the only firms that sell fireworks. If the country at large spent the same amount per capita as did the metropolitans, it must have cost the United States about \$40,000,000 in the year 1900 for fireworks alone. It is possible, however, that New Yorkers may be a little more generous in the use of pyrotechnics than others, even if they are not more patriotic, and to make a safe estimate let us cut the figures in two, and we have \$20,000,000 spent, and for what? This is an intense practical age, and age of business; people want to know what the profits from their investment is. What will it bring? What will be the net result? Will it pay? What then is, or what will be, the net result of the \$20,000,000 investment in fireworks? Was it a good investment, a paying one?

These are fair questions for surely the people of this country do not mean to waste \$20,000,000 on Independence Day, the day which means so much to free America. What is the net result of this large expenditure? Will the end accomplished justify the means? It is a little difficult to gather satisfactory statistics as to the net results of that outburst of so-called patriotism which is willing to blow up \$20,000,000 in powder and smoke. It is estimated that in the Fourth of July celebrations of 1899 more men, women and children were killed and wounded than

during the Spanish American war. What the results of this year's celebration are no one yet knows, but taking our own little town of Ashland with its 4,000 inhabitants we have to record several "runaways," one lawyer going about with four of his fingers torn into threads, a half grown boy with a badly burned face, another minus a hand, and still another crippled, perhaps for life. And this we call patriotism. It seems that we have become so infatuated with the spirit of war, that killing and wounding people have become a necessary part of Fourth of July celebrations. What a hero and a patriot must he be who is willing to lose an arm or both arms, or even his life for the sake of annoying his neighbors and filling their nostrils with the villainous odor of saltpeter. It may be a sign of material prosperity and good times that the expenditures in fireworks, gun powder and lycopodium, this year have exceeded that of any Independence Day for many years, but surely there is no evidence of that fragrant spirit of patriotism which gave the nation freedom 125 years ago.

The time was when this day was dear to every American heart, and it is no less so now to those whose love for native land has its root in Christianity, which, after all, has given patriotism its true character. To us the "Fourth" is always a day of rejoicing. We love the land which gave us a birth place and a home. An invisible and an invincible magnet holds the feet of every true patriot to his native land. But what shall we say of the revelry, the crime and vice, that accompany the observance of the day which should be sacred to all liberty loving people. The day which should be spent in religious devotions, giving thanks to the Father of all gifts, is given over to the rabble which cry for the release of Barabbas, divest it of all its sacredness and turn it into a day of revelry, drunkenness and debauchery. It is a strange inconsistency of character which would atone for this folly by a fervor and zeal which spends its force in indiscriminate shooting of fire crackers. We rejoice in the courage of the Philadelphia Record which dares to speak its sentiments on a question of such vital importance:

The mere din and noise and utter lack of patriotic fervor which characterizes Independence Day observance in these latter days are new fashions. Mere racket is barbarous. Indiscriminate fireworks and shooting are dangerous to life and property.